

December 2019 School Leader Update



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Meeting the needs of Iowa's youngest learners

A highlight of my weekly school visits is popping into early childhood centers and classrooms. I love the joy and unbounded energy that emanates from these rooms. And as a former high school history teacher of mostly juniors and seniors, I have a deep appreciation for our educators who care for and support our youngest learners.

While there are certainly differences between serving young children and the near-graduates I taught, the vision remains the same: every learner will be safe, healthy, engaged and prepared. In Iowa, we're focused on the programs and practices that will make this vision a reality.

But for those who don't have a background in early childhood, particularly parents, the alphabet soup of programs can be intimidating. What's important to know, though, is the range of services meeting the needs of Iowa children and families and creating a foundation for academic and life success.



Director Ryan Wise

[Read more](#)

- Expansion of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old children

Legal Lessons



Attorney Nicole Proesch

It's the holiday season and as per tradition in our house we put up decorations shortly after Halloween so we are prepared and ready to go. Now, in preparation for this holiday season in this edition of Legal Lessons, I bring you some old but good guidance for this time of year: [Important Reminders from IDPH Birth Certificates](#), [Important Reminders on Religious Holiday Celebrations in Public Schools](#), [S*N*O*W D*A*Y*S & H*O*U*R*S Guidance revisited](#), [New Rules Adopted by IPIB](#) and [New Rules Adopted and Noticed by the State Board](#).

Contact Nicole Proesch for all Legal Lessons items - nicole.proesch@iowa.gov or (515) 281-8661.

For questions regarding students with disabilities contact Thomas Mayes at (515) 242-5614 or thomas.mayes@iowa.gov.

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Does your student want to serve on the Iowa State Board of Education?



Applications are being accepted for the student member of the Iowa State Board of Education. Each year the Governor appoints a student to serve as a nonvoting member of the State Board. The term of the student member starts May 1, 2020, and ends April 30, 2021. The State Board meets at least seven times during that term, with most meetings taking place in the Grimes State Office Building in Des Moines. The deadline for submitting an application with all required documents is Jan. 31, 2020. Visit the [Iowa Department of Education's website](#) for additional information.

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Register today for 'Emerging Educators' academy



[Registration](#) is under way for the Fifth Annual Emerging Educators Academy to be held Jan. 30.

The conference, sponsored by the Outstanding Educators' Academy of the Iowa Department of Education, along with the Iowa State Education Association and Simpson College, is for all pre-Service and 1st through 3rd year teachers as well as their mentors.

Participants will have the opportunity to learn from and collaborate with outstanding Iowa educators and professional leaders to focus on recruiting and retaining effective educators.

This year educators will explore "Perspectives in our Practice" and breakout sessions will focus on building classroom community, mental health and developing and keeping a love of teaching. Participants will also spend time with both student and teacher panels exploring different perspectives in teaching.

There will be several special keynote addresses as well as time for teams to discuss learning and plans for success in their schools.

Early-bird registration goes to Dec. 15 at a cost of \$25. After that, the registration fee goes up to \$30. The fee includes materials, lunch, snacks and a T-shirt.

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Iowa Dyslexia Task Force recommendations sent to legislature



On Nov. 15, The Iowa Dyslexia Task Force submitted its report to the legislature. The report outlines current practices and concerns regarding Iowa response to dyslexia and key recommendations for the state to move forward in meeting the needs of students with dyslexia. The Dyslexia Task Force Report highlights five recommendations for the legislature and additional recommendations for the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Area Education Agencies, pre-service education programs, and Iowa school districts.

The Dyslexia Task Force was signed into law by Governor Reynolds on April 17, 2018. Over the past year, the task force has been studying Iowa's response to dyslexia and preparing recommendations. The Iowa Dyslexia Task Force

Executive Report and Report to the Legislature are available to the public on the [Iowa Dyslexia Task Force web page](#). For questions, contact [Katie Greving](#), [Nina Lorimor-Easley](#), or [Kristin Orton](#).

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Assistive Technology (AT) and Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) in the Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Assistive Technology (AT) and Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) needs of students must be considered at each IEP meeting. Currently, items on the IEP ask whether a student needs AT and/or AEM. It seems simple to poll the team during the IEP meeting and make a decision; however, best practice is to complete the consideration process *prior* to the meeting.

Thoughtful consideration of AT and AEM gathers input from family, student, general and special education teachers, as well as from other professionals e.g. AT Specialists and Occupational Therapists. School Technology Specialists can identify accessibility features of technology tools available to all students. The ultimate goal of consideration is for students to be supported for engagement and participation in learning.



Look for step-by-step [AT/AEM IEP consideration guidance](#) on the Iowa Department of Education website. Additional AT and AEM resources can be found in the [A-Z listings](#) on the [Department website](#). For questions, contact MeLissa Lawson at (515)979-6750 or melissa.lawson@iowa.gov.

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PAEMST nominations are open

The 2020 PAEMST Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is open for Nominations for K-6. This is the **“Nation's Highest Honors for Teachers of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM, including Computer Science)”**

This year's awards will honor science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teachers working in grades K-6. Nominations close on March 1, 2020.

[Nominate a teacher](#) today. For questions, contact April Pforts at april.pforts@iowa.gov. For additional information, visit the [Q&A mathematics blog](#).

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STOP School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training Program

The Department was awarded a \$494,000 grant through the U.S. Department of Justice's STOP School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training Program. The federal funding is intended to help schools prevent and respond to acts of violence and respond to students who face mental health challenges.

Iowa's project has three objectives:

- Train teachers and school employees to respond to threats of violence and to prevent violence in schools. Training content will align with school emergency plans.
- Train school staff, area education agency staff, and community members to respond to students who may be struggling with mental health or addiction.
- Educate students on preventing violence against themselves and others.



If your building is interested in participating in the training, complete the [application](#). To learn more, [register](#) to attend an informational webinar on Dec.10 at 11a.m. For questions, contact Nancy Hunt at (515) 326-1031 or nancy.hunt@iowa.gov

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Iowa Learning Online (ILO) to end service

Iowa Learning Online (ILO), the Iowa Department of Education's initiative to expand high-quality online learning opportunities, will be **available through the Spring Semester 2019-20 school year**. After that, districts will either need to create their own online classes or work with a third-party vendor. ILO will no longer directly provide courses after the 2019-20 school year because there is no long-term, sustainable funding source available for operating the program.



Enrollment for spring courses is now in progress. Also, ILO staff are happy to work with your district regarding options for your transition to the use of Department of Education-approved private providers of online courses or your own district-developed online courses.

For questions or concerns, contact Gwen Wallace Nagel at (515)419-3275 or gwen.nagel@iowa.gov.

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Student Reporting in Iowa updates

Another season of Certified Enrollment has closed. The Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI) team commends and thanks you all for your patience and hard work during that process.

Upcoming dates to remember for Student Reporting in Iowa:

- Testing for Winter SRI opens Dec. 2.
- Dropout Verification opens Dec. 2 and closes Dec. 13. If you are not familiar with the Dropout Verification application, or want a refresher, there is a short [webinar](#).



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Input needed on future of career and technical education in Iowa



The Iowa Department of Education has launched an [online survey](#) for students, parents, secondary and postsecondary educators, employers, community members and other education stakeholders to share their observations, experiences and insight on career and technical education (CTE) in Iowa. The input received will help in the development of Iowa's state plan required under the federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, commonly referred to as Perkins V.

Iowa's [Career and Technical Education Advisory Council](#), which was convened by the Department earlier this fall, has requested broad public input to ensure Iowa's state plan meets the unique needs of our learners, educators and employers. Feedback gathered through this online survey will provide guidance to the council, whose charge is to ensure Iowa's state plan positions CTE as a driving force for education, workforce and economic development.

The [online survey](#) is open through December 6.

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Annual upload for Secondary Career and Technical Reporting Application

The annual upload for the Secondary Career and Technical Reporting Application (SCTERA) courses in a program is to be completed by Jan. 31, 2020. Once your Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI) is uploaded, follow the guidance documents found under the [Career and Technical Education Technical Guidance section on the Iowa Department of Education website](#). Note: SRI cannot be certified until SCTERA is completed. The Bureau of Career and Technical Education will be holding virtual office hours via ZOOM weekly in January to help those needing additional guidance in completing the report. Those dates and times are:

Jan. 6, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Jan. 13, 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Jan. 20, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Jan. 27, 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Log in to the following ZOOM account at the designated times above to have your questions answered: <https://IDOE.zoom.us/j/8829669365>

For questions, contact Lisa Stange at 515-242-5032 lisa.stange@iowa.gov

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Universal Desk Audits due Dec. 15



All Universal Desk Audits are due in the Consolidated Accountability and Support Application (CASA) as soon as possible, but no later than Dec. 15. Content questions should be directed [to the Preschool or School Improvement Consultant assigned to your district](#). For questions about the CASA system, contact Meredith MacQuigg at meredith.macquigg@iowa.gov.

- [Universal K-12 Desk Audit \(public\)](#)
- [Universal K-12 Desk Audit \(nonpublic\)](#)
- [Universal AEA Desk Audit](#)
- [Universal Preschool Desk Audit - Evidence of IQPPS Implementation](#)

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Expansion of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old children



School districts not currently participating in the [Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program](#) (SWVPP) may submit an application to begin a preschool program in 2020-21. The [application](#) is due April 6, 2020. Districts are encouraged to review the [FAQs](#) to support application development.

This non-competitive application requires districts to fund the preschool program using other funding sources for year one (2020-2021). One funding option for SWVPP startup costs is the flexibility account. Districts may move unexpended, unobligated funds remaining at the end of the previous fiscal year from certain sources to a flexibility account within the general fund. Districts, through a board resolution including specific stipulations, described in [298A.2](#), can then expend

these funds for SWVPP startup costs. Guidance pertaining to the flexibility account is posted on the [General Fund](#) web page. In year two, districts receive state aid based on the number of eligible four-year-old children served in year one.

For information about the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children, contact Jennifer Adkins at (515) 954-5652 or jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov, or Mary Breyfogle at (515) 326-1030 or mary.breyfogle@iowa.gov.

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